DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 376 476 CS 214 601

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TITLE Showcase Writing Portfolios: An Instructional Strategy for First Graders.
PUB DATE 94
NOTE 80p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Grade 1; Instructional Effectiveness; *Portfolio Assessment; *Portfolios (Background Materials); Primary Education; Student Motivation; *Writing Improvement; Writing Instruction; Writing Research
IDENTIFIERS Roseville Public Schools MI

ABSTRACT

A study examined the effectiveness of showcase writing portfolios, a 9-week intervention strategy to improve 18 first-grade students' writing. Students (who were from Roseville, Michigan) selected most of the entries in their "showcase" portfolios. Subjects' writing was assessed on three measures: the quality of writing was assessed using modified holistic rubrics; the quantity of writing produced was assessed using a count of the total words written and the number of words per paper; and the frequency of visitation to the writing center was used as a measure of their motivation to write. Results indicated a significant increase on all three measures. Correlational analysis established a positive relationship among the three measures. Findings suggest that showcase writing portfolios are an effective strategy to be used in the classroom to improve writing. (Contains 70 references, 2 tables and 4 figures of data. Appendixes present data, scoring rubrics, student writing samples, an observation checklist, and three lesson plans.) (Author/RS)

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Showcase Writing Portfolios:
An Instructional Strategy for First Graders

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ABSTRACT

Showcase writing portfolios were used for nine weeks as an intervention strategy to improve first grade students' writing. This study has a pretest-posttest design wherein eighteen first grade students' writing was assessed on three measures. First, the quality of their writing was assessed using modified holistic rubrics. Second, the quantity of writing produced was assessed using a count of the total words written and the number of words per paper. Third, frequency of visitation to the writing center was used as a measure of their motivation to write. Analysis using the t-test showed a significant increase on all three measures. Thus, showcase writing portfolios are an effective strategy to be used in the classroom to improve writing. Additionally, correlational analysis established that there is a positive relationship among the three measures.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

"I used to write...but I come to school now." These are the words spoken by Freddie, a kindergarten student, to Anne Haas Dyson (1982). What a sad commentary on this child's school. Before students even enter the school system, they often believe that they can write. However, when they enter school, they are no longer allowed to write, because teachers are unwilling to accept their early forms of writing. These early attempts at writing are often illegible, the spelling is incorrect, the grammar may be poor, and the paper may be messy, with words scribbled out, black erasures, and rips. For students in the early childhood years, however, these "mistakes" are a natural part of their development. Teachers need to allow students the opportunity to make these mistakes in order to move into the next level of development. Teachers can do this not only by implementing a writing process approach, allowing students to select their own topics on which to write, instituting writing centers, modelling writing for the students, holding writing conferences, but also by maintaining showcase writing portfolios as an additional teaching strategy. Portfolios need not be used solely as an evaluative measure. Advocates of portfolio usage claim that portfolios can be used to link practice, instruction, and evaluation. However, there are no studies showing the instructional effectiveness of portfolio use. Instructional strategies, including portfolios, can enhance the quality and quantity of their written products, and their motivational

processes. We would then have no more Freddies. Rather, we would have students who say, " I used to write a little...but now I come to school, and I write better."

Writing Outcomes

Three outcomes for the children's writing were considered in this study: quality of writing, quantity of writing, and motivation to write. Both the quality and quantity of the writing are product measures, while motivation to write is a process measure.

Quality of Writing

Bingham (1982), Graves (1978, 1983, 1989), Strickland and Morrow (1989), and Temple, Nathan, Burris, and Temple (1988), whose theories are based on developmental and whole language principles, recommend the shift toward conventional writing as a measure of writing development, but in their empirical research they do not explicitly define "What is high quality writing?" However, it is this high quality writing that schools expect that the children should finally achieve.

According to Macmillan/McGraw-Hill (1993), a high quality piece of writing should establish and focus on the purpose of the writing task, whether that is a description, a narrative story, directions, or a letter. A piece of writing which has high quality shows a clear awareness of the intended audience, organizes content and ideas in a logical way, and is fluent and cohesive. It also includes appropriate details to clarify ideas. In contrast, a poor quality piece of writing is confused in purpose or does not respond to the writing task. Content is

unorganized or illogically presented, and the piece includes few or no details.

One way to determine quality of writing is to examine the characteristics of good story writing. A high quality story has a clear beginning, middle, and ending should be present. A setting, internal response, reactions, multiple attempts and consequences, and morals may be present, but are not necessary (Fitzgerald, 1992; King & Rentel, 1981; Sulzby & Teale, 1985; Temple et al., 1988). If clear beginning, middle, and ending events are present, the story is focused, has purpose, and is logically organized.

Calkins (1986), Graves (1983), Graves & Hansen (1989), Sulzby & Teale (1985), and Throne (1992) consider awareness of audience an essential feature of a high quality paper. They recommend that the author should take into account the needs of the reader. For example, personal pronouns are only used when there is a direct referent and the reader should not have to guess to which "she" the author is referring (King & Rentel, 1981).

Quantity of Writing

The quantity of writing that students do is assessed by means of concept units (Norris, 1990), word counts (Chall & Jacobs, 1983; Dickinson, 1990; Donato, 1990; Dooley, 1987; Esch, 1991; Peyton, 1988; Turewicz, 1983), length of sentences and paragraphs (Dooley, 1987), and paper counts (Donato, 1990). This higher output or volume of written material produced does not in and of itself guarantee a higher quality of writing (Neill, 1982;

Peyton, 1988), but it may be a factor in improving writing when combined with appropriate instructions. Dickinson (1990), Donato (1990), Dooley (1987), Esch (1991), Norris (1990), and Peyton (1988) reported on an increase in the quality and quantity of writing after interventions. However, no correlations were performed on the quality and quantity of writing to determine if the two were significantly related. Turewicz (1983) did correlational analysis and found no relationship between quality and quantity of writing in tenth graders journal writing, when analyzed over a one month period.

Motivation to Write

Motivation to write has been studied through the use of attitudinal surveys (Dooley, 1987; Donato, 1990; Esch, 1991; Norris, 1990; Turewicz, 1983), counts of class disruption (Dickinson, 1990), and observation of voluntary writing (Donato, 1990).

Ferreiro (1989), Fields & Hillstead (1986), Kamii (1985), and Manning and Manning (1989) are constructivists who believe that children must go through a series of "wrong" theories about how writing works, and through the processes of assimilation and accommodation, eventually learn the how and why of "correct" writing. Thus, they need ample opportunity to write. Donald Graves (1983) recommends writing a minimum of four times a week to see any appreciable difference in the quality of children's writing, but also states that children write far less than this. Marie Clay (1982) found that very little actual writing goes on in the classroom, especially in early childhood.

Traditionally, journal entries provide all children the opportunity to write. Dooley (1987) and Dunkeld and Anderson (1983) report that journal writing motivated the students to have a more positive feeling about writing and increased the quality of their writing.

Strategies to Promote Writing

The above mentioned three writing outcomes are dependent upon the following teacher strategies: 1) employing the writing process, 2) allowing students to select their own writing topics, 3) holding writing conferences, 4) modelling writing, 5) implementing writing centers, and 6) incorporating writing portfolios. Each of these six teaching strategies' impact on the outcomes, namely quality and quantity of writing and motivation to write, will be examined next.

Teachers Employing The Writing Process

To improve children's writing, teachers need to incorporate the writing process method into the curriculum. This is a paradigm shift from previous methods of teaching writing, where students were given a writing assignment, were expected to write, and then turned in their work to be corrected and graded. In the writing process, students do prewriting activities, write, revise, and publish their work (Aulls, 1985; Beeker, 1981; Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983; Humes, 1983; Nathan, Temple, Juntunen, & Temple, 1989; Sowers, 1982, 1983; Strickland & Morrow, 1989; Tchudi & Tchudi, 1983; Temple et al., 1988; Timion, 1992; Wasson, 1993).

Graves (1981) and Calkins (1986) observed that when employing the writing process, students produced a higher quality of writing than the traditional methods. Calkins (1986) explained it by saying that only through the writing process "do most writers know what they want to say" (p. 16). Neill (1982) found that students who were taught to write with a process approach scored better on standardized tests than students in traditional classrooms. Hauser (1982) found through observations that students produced better quality products, even when using only minor revisions. Donato (1990) found an increase from 25 to 100 percent in the quality of the writing fifth grade students produced after the writing process was introduced. Dickinson (1990) achieved an increase from eight percent to 23 percent in the number of students who scored in the middle or high range of her quality scale when the writing process was introduced in high school.

The quantity of writing students produce is also affected through the use of the writing process. Again, Graves' (1981) observations show that students increase the length of their writing through revision. Calkins (1986) concurs with these findings. Donato (1990) and Esch (1991) found that when the writing process was practiced it dramatically increased the quantity of writing produced, according to pre and post intervention word counts. Dickinson (1990) also found that incorporating a process approach in a writing workshop increased the quantity of writing high school students produced. Beeker (1981) states that children learn early in school that lack of

quality results in fewer negative consequences than does lack of quantity. Teachers invoke negative consequences such as loss of recess and after school detentions when work is not completed, but not when the quality is poor.

Motivation to write can also be improved through the use of the writing process. Graves (1981) in his observations of children and discussions with teachers found that students using the writing process took ownership of their work, and with this ownership comes the motivation to write and revise. Neill (1982) states that publishing students' writing has been found to be one of the best ways to motivate students to write. Donato (1990) found an increase from 25 to 88 percent in students attitudes toward writing after introducing the writing process. Dickinson (1990) found that positive opinions about writing increased from 20 percent to 53 percent once the writing process was implemented.

Teachers Allowing Student Selection

Calkins, (1986) Graves, (1975, 1983), Hansen et al., (1985) and Temple et al., (1988) recommend allowing students to select their own topics on which to write in order to improve students' writing. Spaulding (1992) believes that due to their involvement in the writing,students gain control over their writing, invest themselves into their writing, and gain intrinsic motivation, and therefore produce higher quality work. Additionally, scholars feel that students are more willing to revisit and revise a piece that they are emotionally involved with, further improving the

quality of the piece (Graves, 1981, 1985; Temple, Nathan, Burris, & Temple, 1988).

When students select their own topics on which to write, it may also increase the quantity of their ideas. Fear, Anderson, Englert, and Raphael (1987) report that students who were allowed to choose their own topics were able to list 1.5 times more topics on which to write than students where a teacher assigned the topic. This increase in the number of available topics might lead to an increase in the amount written about the topic students select. Peyton (1988) found that ESL students wrote three times as much in their journals where they were in control of the topic than they did when the teacher assigned a topic.

Farnan & Kelly (1991) believe that self-selection of topics is more motivating and rewarding than teacher selection, and this in turn affects performance. Students who select their own topics on which to write are thought to have higher levels of interest and engagement in their writing than those who are assigned topics (Tierney, 1982). Writing becomes a personal project for the children, one which they care about doing well (Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1981). Hauser (1982) observed immediate and enthusiastic response from first graders when they were allowed to select their own topics.

Teachers Holding Writing Conferences

Researchers' observations and anecdotal records suggest that the input the author receives from others in conferences encourages revisions (e.g. reorganizing the story for clarity, adding details, and changing the content); therefore, it improves

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the quality of the writing (Bunce, 1982; Calkins, 1986; Callahan, 1982; Dionisio, 1982; Flemming, 1982; Graves, 1983; Graves & Giacobbe, 1982; Hansen et al., 1985; Hauser, 1982; Nathan et al., 1989; Neill, 1982; Sowers, 1985; Sulzby, 1989; Temple et al., 1988).

There is no research that writing conferences also increase the quantity of writing. However, students' motivation to write may be heightened through the use of writing conferences. Graves (1985) observed that students who were allowed to share their books with an audience took great pleasure in this activity. Simmons (1982) observed that a prewriting conference was a prime motivator for writing. Students who decided upon a topic with the help of others and discussed their topic before beginning to write were eager to begin writing.

Teachers Modelling Writing

Dionisio, (1982) Graves, (1975) Graves, (1983) Manning & Manning, (1989) and Nathan et al., (1989) encourage teachers to model their writing in order to improve children's writing. Through modelling, students gain insight into the elements of high quality writing. Strickland and Morrow (1990) believe students can then incorporate what they have seen modelled into their own writing. Neill (1982) found that modelling writing results in improvement in the quality of students' writing. Fear, et al. (1987), found that students in a classroom where the teacher modelled writing were more aware of problems in their own writing, and had internalized methods of dealing with problems that occurred. In the comparison classroom where the teacher did

no modelling, the students were highly dependent on external diagnosis and responses to writing difficulties.

No research on the effects of teacher modelling on the quantity of writing students produce or on their motivation to write is available.

Teachers Implementing Writing Centers

Calkins, (1986) Dionisio, (1989) Strickland & Morrow, (1989) and Temple et al., (1988) have observed that promoting the use of a writing center that includes many different materials can improve students' writing. When art and writing centers are placed next to each other, it encourages multi-media constructions, which also improves the quality of the students' work (Temple, et al., 1988).

Practitioners such as Fields and Hillstead (1986) and Hauser (1982) observed students high level of interest and excitement in a newly introduced writing center. Fields and Hillstead (1986) opined that the teacher's acceptance of the writing done in this center allowed them to gain confidence in their abilities and experiment with writing.

Teachers Incorporating Writing Portfolios

Portfolios may be used to hold all works in progress, completed work showcasing the students' best efforts, rough drafts, or a collection of various types of writing, used for evaluation of a student's writing skills across different genres (Bingham, 1982: Graves, 1975; Graves, 1978; Graves, 1989; Strickland & Morrow, 1989; Temple et al., 1988; Valencia & Calfee, 1991). Regardless of the type of work collected,

portfolios claim to integrate instruction, practice, and evaluation. During the last decade, there has been a growing body of research and scholarly writing on how to organize portfolios and how to use them for evaluating children's writing (Baker & Linn, 1992; Farnan & Kelly, 1991; Gearhart, 1992; Gomez, Graue, & Bloch, 1991; Hiebert & Hutchison, 1991; Lamme & Hysmith, 1991; LeMahieu, Eresh, & Wallace, 1992; Maeroff, 1991; Pils, 1991; Teale, 1988). However, there is no information on what role, if any, portfolios can play as an instructional strategy to enhance quality and quantity of writing and children's motivation to write. All research has been done on portfolios as an evaluative tool, not as an instructional tool. Hence, this study attempts to examine the effectiveness of showcase portfolios as a method of teaching children to enhance their writing products in terms of quality and quantity, and also to motivate them to participate in the very writing process.

Research Questions

A. What would be the outcome of introducing showcase writing portfolios on :

1. the quality of students' writing, as assessed by the modified holistic rubrics;
2. the quantity of students' writing, as assessed by the total words written and by the words per paper; and,
3. the motivation of the students to write, as assessed by the frequency of the frequency of their visitation to the writing center?

B. What would be the relationship between the following outcomes:

1. quality of writing and quantity of writing;
2. quality of writing and students' motivation to write; and,
3. quantity of writing and motivation to write?

Hypotheses

A. Introduction of showcase writing portfolios would result in a significant increase, as measured by the t-test, in:

1. the quality of students' writing;
2. the quantity of students' writing; and,
3. students' motivation to write.

B. Showcase portfolio writing intervention will result in a significant positive relationship, as measured by correlational analysis, between the following outcomes:

1. quality and quantity of students' writing;

2. quality of students' writing and students' motivation to write; and,
3. quantity of students' writing and students' motivation to write.

METHOD

Subjects

Eighteen first grade students, with a mean age of 7 years, 1 month, ranging from 6 years 3 months to 7 years 9 months, were chosen for this project. All of the students attended a local elementary school in the Roseville Community Schools, Roseville, Michigan. Of the eighteen students, eleven were girls and eight were boys. Two students in the classroom were not included as subjects, due to their pending placement in full-time special education classes. Two of the students included in the study were repeating first grade. The socioeconomic level was middle to lower class, as determined from overall available school data. The cultural makeup consisted of American students having mainly European heritage, with the exception of one student who was Native American, and one who was Hispanic.

Measures

Three separate characteristics of the first graders writing were examined: quality of writing, quantity of writing, and motivation to write. Each characteristic was assessed using a different measure, both before and after the showcase portfolio writing intervention. The data collected on all three measures in the preassessment and post assessment periods was converted to mean scores for each child (Appendix A).

Qualitative Measure

The overall quality of the writing was scored on four general characteristics (focus, purpose, content, and organization), using the modified holistic rubrics developed by

the Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Company (Appendix B). Students could receive a score from zero to four, based on observable qualities of their writing. A score of zero indicated an unscorable paper, due to being blank or incomplete. Criteria for the scores from one to four, as developed by Macmillan/McGraw-Hill (Appendix B), were based on the degree to which students addressed the task of writing a story, showed awareness of audience, organized content, included details, and demonstrated fluency and cohesion. Spelling and grammar were not part of the criteria for scoring, as long as they did not detract from the overall clarity and meaning of the student's writing. Specific criteria for different types of writing (narrative story, description, friendly letter, and how-to) was also included. For the purpose of this study, writing samples of stories and descriptions were only available, so only these criteria were relevant. For samples of student work scored on the rubrics, see Appendix C. The inter-rater reliability of this scoring method has been tested by the Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Company and was found to range from .75 to .87 on writing done in second through eighth grades.

Quantitative Measure

The quantity of writing the students produced was measured by two methods. First, a total word count of all writing done during each assessment period was made. Secondly, the total number of words they produced was divided by the number of papers they turned in during each assessment period to provide a count of the average number of words per paper.

Motivational Measure

In order to assess each students motivation to write, student choice during daily center times was observed and recorded on a form (Appendix D). The frequency with which students choose to attend the writing center was uses as a motivational measure. Students did not have to stay at the writing center for the entire center time in order to be marked as attending. During the pre and post assessment periods, no child ever left the writing center and returned on the same day, so the issue of visiting the center for two short periods versus one long period did not occur. However, the frequencies for visitation to the writing center vary in duration from child to child, depending on the length of time they spent there.

Procedure

The first five strategies to promote writing discussed in the review of research literature (ie. teachers employing the writing process, allowing student selection, holding writing conferences, modelling writing, and implementing writing centers) were the theoretical and empirical foundations of the classroom practices. All these strategies were implemented by the teacher in this first grade. This study then added a new dimension: using showcase writing portfolios as an instructional strategy to improve the quality and quantity of students' writing, and the students' motivation to write.

Classroom Prior to Intervention

The five strategies reviewed in the research were already in place before this study began, and will be discussed in this section. A writing process approach, which included prewriting, writing, editing, and publishing, was used with the students. When the students arrived each morning, they were required to write in their journals for the first ten minutes of class. The students selected their own topics on which to write. Everyone, including the teacher, wrote during this time. After ten minutes, the teacher would circulate around the room, checking on what various students were doing, listening to work, or offering assistance when necessary. This was the cue for the students to proceed with writing activities. When the teacher began circulating, students could continue writing, meet with friends for writing conferences, edit their writing, work on publishing their books, or meet with the teacher individually or in small groups for a writing conference. After 30 minutes, the teacher would call students to a whole group sharing session. Students who had work they wanted to share with the class would have signed up during journal time to do so. Three students shared their work daily, answering questions and accepting suggestions as they were offered by the rest of the group. After they had shared their work, they could choose to revise it in light of comments made by the other students, publish it, or file it in their journal. Sharing time was followed by either a modelled writing lesson or reading.

Students had another chance to work on their writing later in the day. Each afternoon, students worked at centers for approximately 45 minutes. A variety of learning centers, including math, science, reading, art, and creative drama, were set up at which the students could work. The writing center was always an option available for the students to choose. Students were not assigned to particular centers; rather, they were free to choose the center they wished to attend. Many centers had limits on the number of students who could participate at any given time, but the writing center could be used by any number of students. No restrictions were placed on the number of students who could be there. All of these activities had been in place since the beginning of the year.

Showcase Writing Portfolio Intervention

Preassessment

Before introducing the showcase writing portfolios, the three writing outcomes, namely the quality and quantity of writing and motivation to write were assessed for each child. All journal writing was collected from January 24, 1994 to February 11, 1994. It was then scored on both the qualitative and quantitative measures. Students' motivation to write was also recorded during this time period. In all, 67 papers were received during this time period for the eighteen students. The average number of papers received per child was 3.72, with a range of 1 to 10 papers.

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Intervention

A showcase portfolio "portrays a collection of the student's best or favorite work. The unique feature of this approach is that the student selects most of the entries, so that the portfolio emerges as a unique portrait of the individual over time" (Valencia & Calfee, 1991, p. 337). This was the operational definition of showcase portfolio for this intervention procedure. Showcase portfolios were introduced on February 14, 1994 as a method of increasing the quality of students' writing, quantity of students' writing, and students' motivation to write. Each morning during the first week of the intervention period, a mini-lesson on showcase portfolio use, lasting ten to fifteen minutes was taught (Appendix E). Then, the students began the journal writing period described previously. The showcase portfolios were available to the students both during the morning journal period and during the afternoon center time. The students were reminded throughout the nine week intervention period that their portfolios were available during these times. The showcase portfolios were used by the students for nine weeks (one grading quarter).

Post Assessment

After the intervention, another three week assessment period began, lasting from April 25, 1994 to May 14, 1994. Again, the students' writing was collected and scored on the quality and quantity measures and their motivation to write as assessed by the observed frequency of their visitation to the writing center. During this assessment period, 118 papers were collected from the

students. The average number of papers collected per student was 6.67, with a range from 4 to 10 papers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quality of Writing

Hypothesis A-1: Introduction of showcase writing portfolios will result in a significant increase, as measured by the t-test, in the quality of students' writing.

Table 1

T-test Results for Quality of Writing, Quantity of Writing, and Motivation to Write

		Mean		Standard Deviation		t-value	Probability
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post		
Quality of Writing		.91	2.02	.49	.61	9.02	.000
Quantity of Writing	Total Words	34.72	166.17	32.25	92.64	6.50	.000
	Words per Paper	8.59	24.89	3.60	10.16	7.29	.000
Motivation to Write		1.33	4.11	1.19	3.12	4.65	.000

The preassessment quality score on the holistic writing rubrics was $M = .91$ ($SD = .49$, with a range from 0 to 1.9). The post assessment quality score on the holistic rubrics was $M = 2.02$ ($SD = .61$, range from 1.14 to 3.4). As shown in Table 1, the quality of the students' writing increased significantly, $t(17) = 9.02$, $p < .001$. Thus, the intervention of showcase writing portfolios was a successful strategy in significantly increasing the quality of writing done by the students, as measured by the holistic rubrics.

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Additionally, when one compares the writing received during the pre and post measures, there is a striking change in the quality of the writing as shown in the samples.

Sample from preassessment measures:

I like fut and fahtb's (I like fruit and vegetables)

I like apple's and salary (I like apples and celery)

Sample from post assessment measures:

frogs have wet skin and hind lag's to hap them jip. Som frog's are brownish red. Frog's got now skin because ther old skin kam's of. frogs lev in meny pase like the swap thay are slimy thay slep out of your hande sam frogs lev in wals thay are had to cach frogs frst are tadpols then frogs Bit som frogs are pozin like tree frogs

(Frogs have wet skin and hind legs to help them jump. Some frogs are brownish-red. Frogs get new skin, because their old skin comes off. Frogs live in many places, like the swamp. They are slimy. They slip out of your hands. Some frogs live in wells. They are hard to catch. Frogs first are tadpoles, then frogs. But some frogs are poison, like tree frogs.)

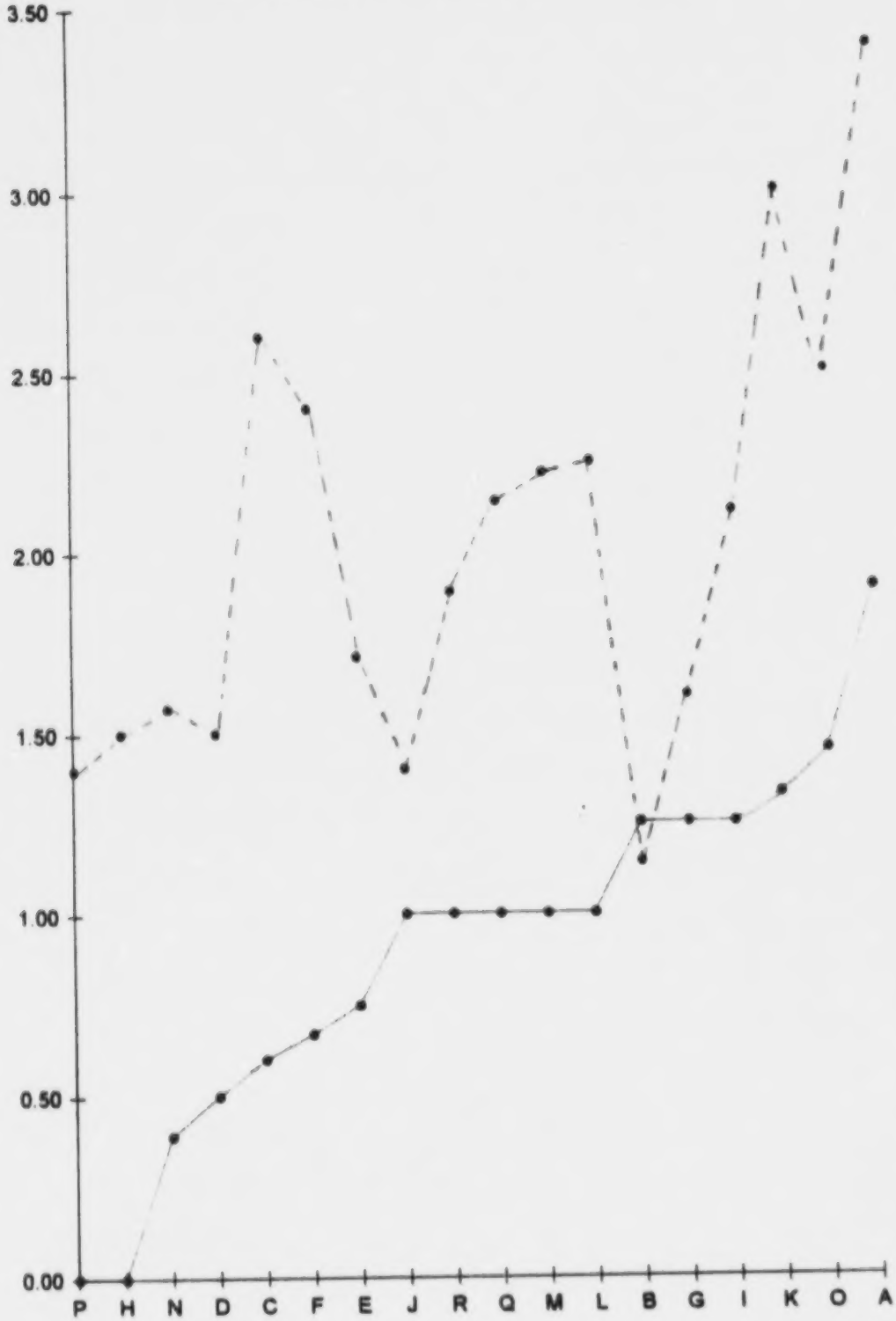
The above samples show that Student A. spent much more time on her second writing sample than on her first writing sample. The first sample was written in one day, while the second was written over a period of three days. When she first began writing, she wrote one story each day, without rereading or revisiting any of her work from previous days. Although the second sample is still in a rough draft form, her work indicates that the student knows her subject. The piece is focused--every

sentence tells the reader about frogs. The preassessment sample is also focused--the author is writing only about fruits and vegetables. In the post assessment sample, she has achieved a purpose--informing the reader about frogs. The preassessment sample may have the purpose of informing the reader which fruits and vegetables the author enjoys, but does not attain this purpose. There is not enough content to adequately perform such a purpose. In the post assessment sample, there is plenty of content with facts and details to achieve the purpose of informing the reader. The author is aware of the needs of her audience, using details and explanations to aid in telling the facts. The use of details is attempted in the preassessment sample, but is not consciously used to explain anything. It is basically a patterned text. The preassessment sample is well organized, as the first statement is a main idea, and the second is a detail supporting it. With the exception of the sentence "Some frogs live in wells", the post assessment sample is also well organized. Three main ideas are covered: 1) characteristics of frogs, 2) where frogs live, and 3) why frogs are hard to catch. The post assessment sample receives high marks on focus, purpose, content, and organization, and therefore, is a high quality piece of writing.

As can be seen in the graph shown in Figure 1, all but one of the children increased the mean quality of their work after the portfolio intervention. This child did increase her scores on every other measure.

Figure 1.

MEANS FOR PRE & POST RUBRIC SCORES



Students D, H, and P were mainstreamed special education students (learning disabled). Before portfolios were instituted, these three students had three of the four lowest mean quality scores on the holistic rubrics for their writing. Two of these students received a zero as their mean score. After the intervention, all three of these students had begun producing legible writing. While their scores are still near the bottom of the class as a whole, they made tremendous gains. When comparing the amount of change in the mean quality scores on the holistic rubrics, the class ranged from -.11 to 1.73, with a mean of 1.11. Student P increased her mean quality score by 1.4 points. She ranked fourth in the class regarding the amount of positive change in her mean quality score. Student H increased his mean quality score by 1.5 points, ranking him fifth. Student D increased his mean quality score by 1.0 points, ranking him eleventh.

Quantity of Writing

Hypothesis A-2: Introduction of showcase writing portfolios will result in a significant increase, as measured by the t-test, in the quantity of students' writing. Quantity was defined in two parts: the total words written by the children during the observation periods, and the words per page written during the observation periods.

Total Number of Words

As can be seen in Table 1, the results support the hypothesis in that there was a significant increase in the total number of words written by the students. The mean number of

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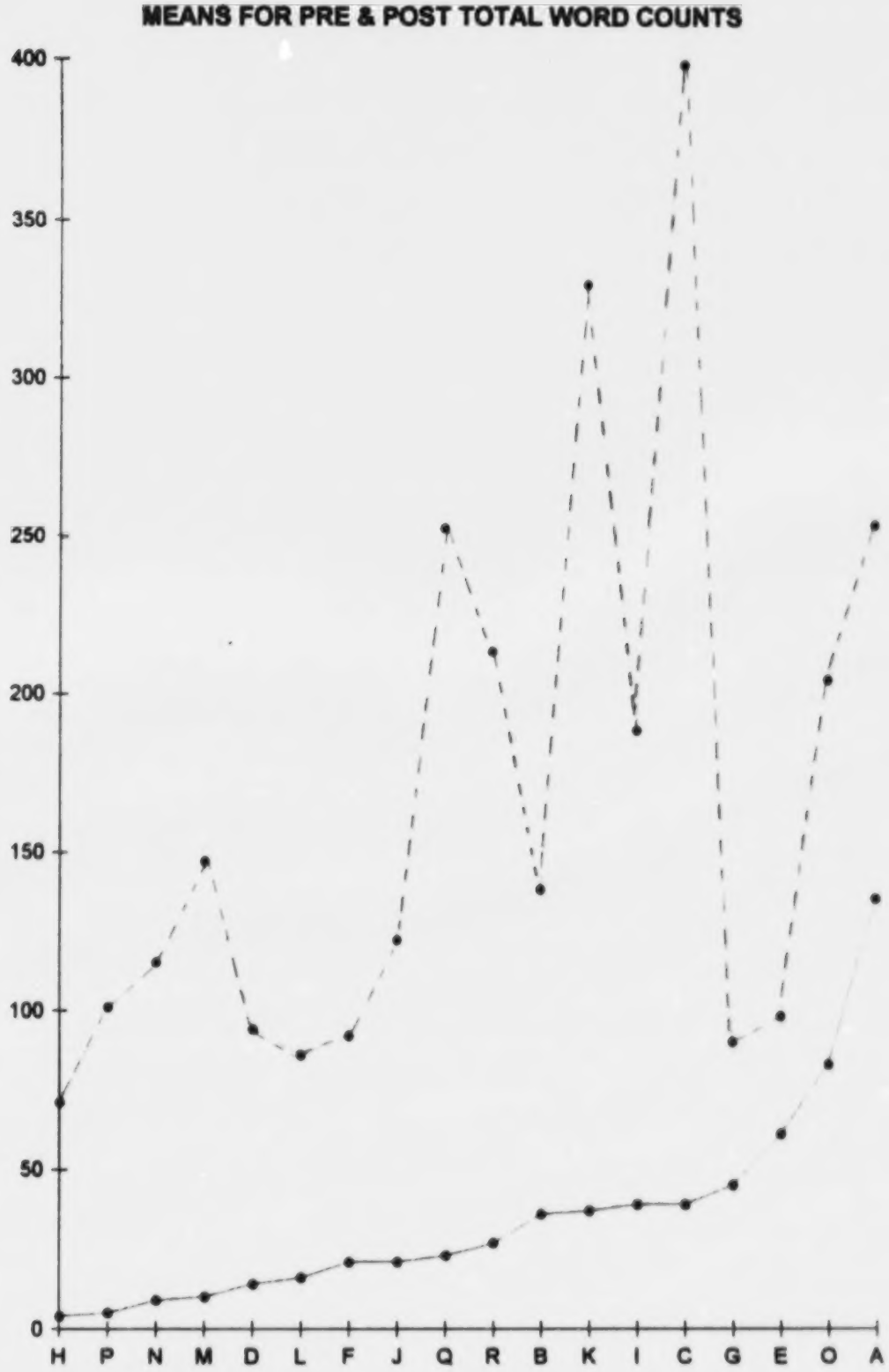
words written during the pre-assessment was 34.72 (SD = 32.25,with a range from 4 to 135). The mean number of words written during the post assessment was 166.17 (SD = 92.64, with a range from 71 to 398). The total number of words written increased significantly, $t(17) = 34.72$, $p < .001$. Thus, the intervention of showcase writing portfolios was a successful strategy in significantly increasing the total number of words written by the students.

Figure 2 illustrates that on the post-assessment, every child increased the total number of words written. Dickinson (1990), Donato (1990), Esch (1991), and Norris (1990) used methods other than portfolios to increase the quantity of student writing. The results of this study now extend their findings to also include portfolios as a method of improving the quantity of writing.

The three mainstreamed special education students made tremendous gains in this area, also. The increase in the total number of words written ranged from 37 to 359, $M = 131.44$. Student D increased his total number of words by 80 words, Student H increased his total number of words by 67, and Student P increased her total number of words by 96. In a ranking strictly by change in number of words, these three students rank thirteenth, sixteenth, and twelfth, respectively, all below the mean. However, when the rankings are done based on the percentage of increase, these students rank seventh (671% increase), second (1775% increase), and first (2020% increase), respectively. The percentage of increase for the entire class in

Figure 2.


MEANS FOR PRE & POST TOTAL WORD COUNTS
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
H
P
N
M
D
L
F
J
Q
R
B
K
I
C
G
E
O
A

the total number of words written before and after the intervention ranged from 128% to 2020%, M = 653%. Two of these students made gains in their total number of words more than double the class average.

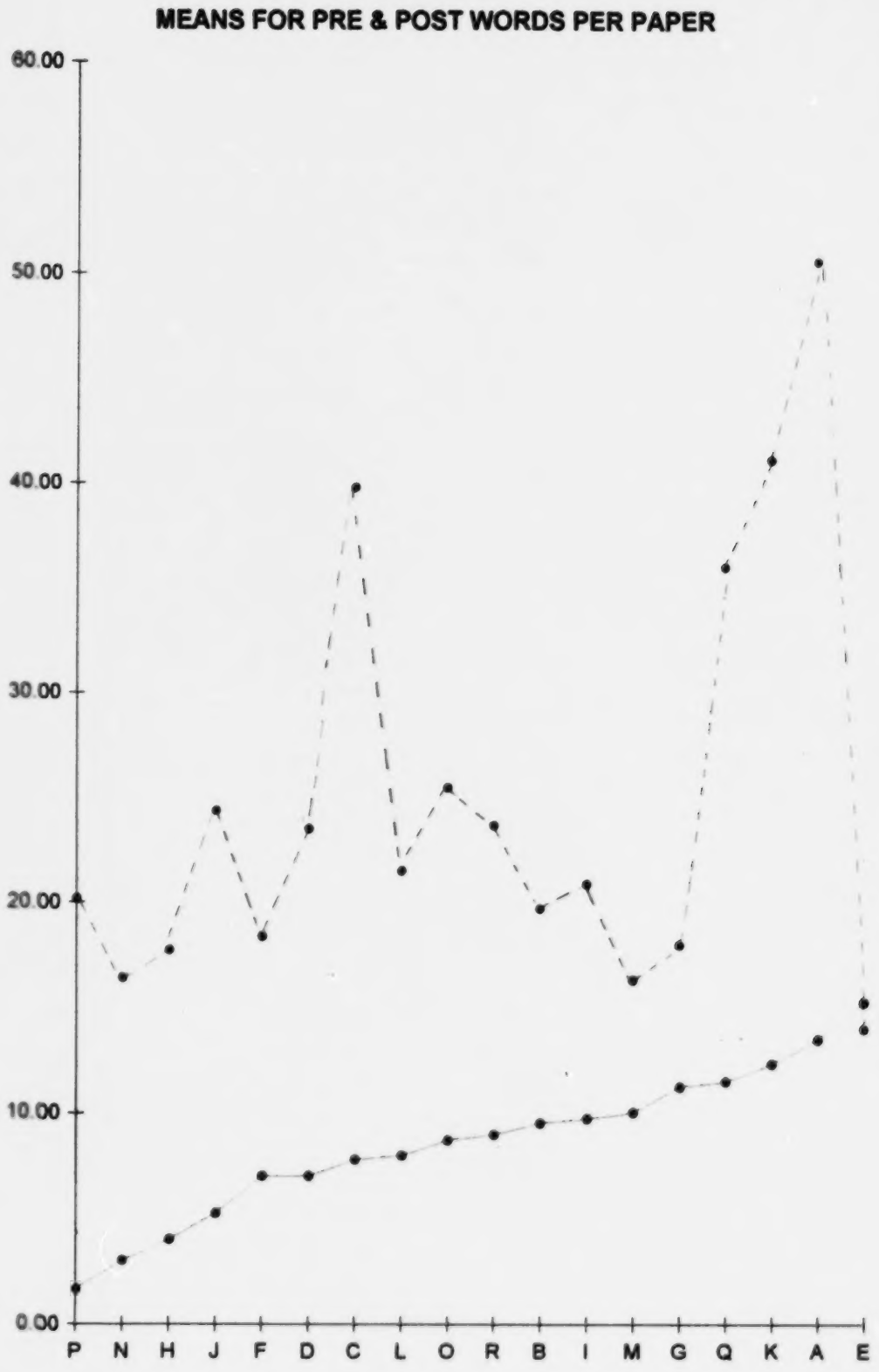
Words per Paper

As can be seen in Table 1, the results support the hypothesis in that there was a significant increase in the words per paper written by the students. The preassessment quantity score for words per paper was M = 8.59 (SD = 3.6, range from 1.67 to 15.25). The post assessment quantity score for words per paper was M = 24.89 (SD = 10.16, range from 14.0 to 50.6). The quantity of student writing as measured by words per paper increased significantly, $t(17) = 7.29$, $p < .001$. Thus, the intervention of introducing showcase writing portfolios was a successful strategy in significantly increasing the quantity of writing as assessed by the words per paper.

In Figure 3, it should be noted that 17 out of 18 children increased their number of words per paper. Only one child wrote fewer words per paper in the post assessment than in the preassessment. This child was a different individual from the one whose quality score decreased. On all other measures of writing, this student increased.

The three mainstreamed special education students again made large gains in this area after the intervention. After the showcase portfolio writing intervention, the individual words per paper ranged from 14.0 to 50.6. Student D had written 23.5 words per paper, ranking him eighth. Student H had written 17.75 words

Figure 3.


MEANS FOR PRE & POST WORDS PER PAPER
60.00
50.00
40.00
30.00
20.00
10.00
0.00
P N H J F D C L O R B I M G Q K A E

per paper, ranking him fifteenth. Student P had written 20.2 words per paper, ranking her eleventh. These numbers of words per paper are comparatively low, but one needs to take into consideration that these students started with 7.0, 4.0, and 1.67 words per paper respectively. Therefore, it is the amount of change in words per paper that shows the gains they made. The amount of change for the entire class ranged from -1.25 to 37.1 words per paper, with an average gain of 16.29 words per paper. Based on the amount of change in words per paper, Student D ranks eighth with an increase of 16.5 words per paper, Student H ranks tenth with an increase of 13.75 words per paper, and Student P ranks sixth with an inccrease of 18.53 words per paper. All three rankings are in the top half of the class. Thus, the showcase writing portfolio intervention was a successful strategy for increasing the words per paper for these students, as well as increasing the words per paper for the class as a whole.

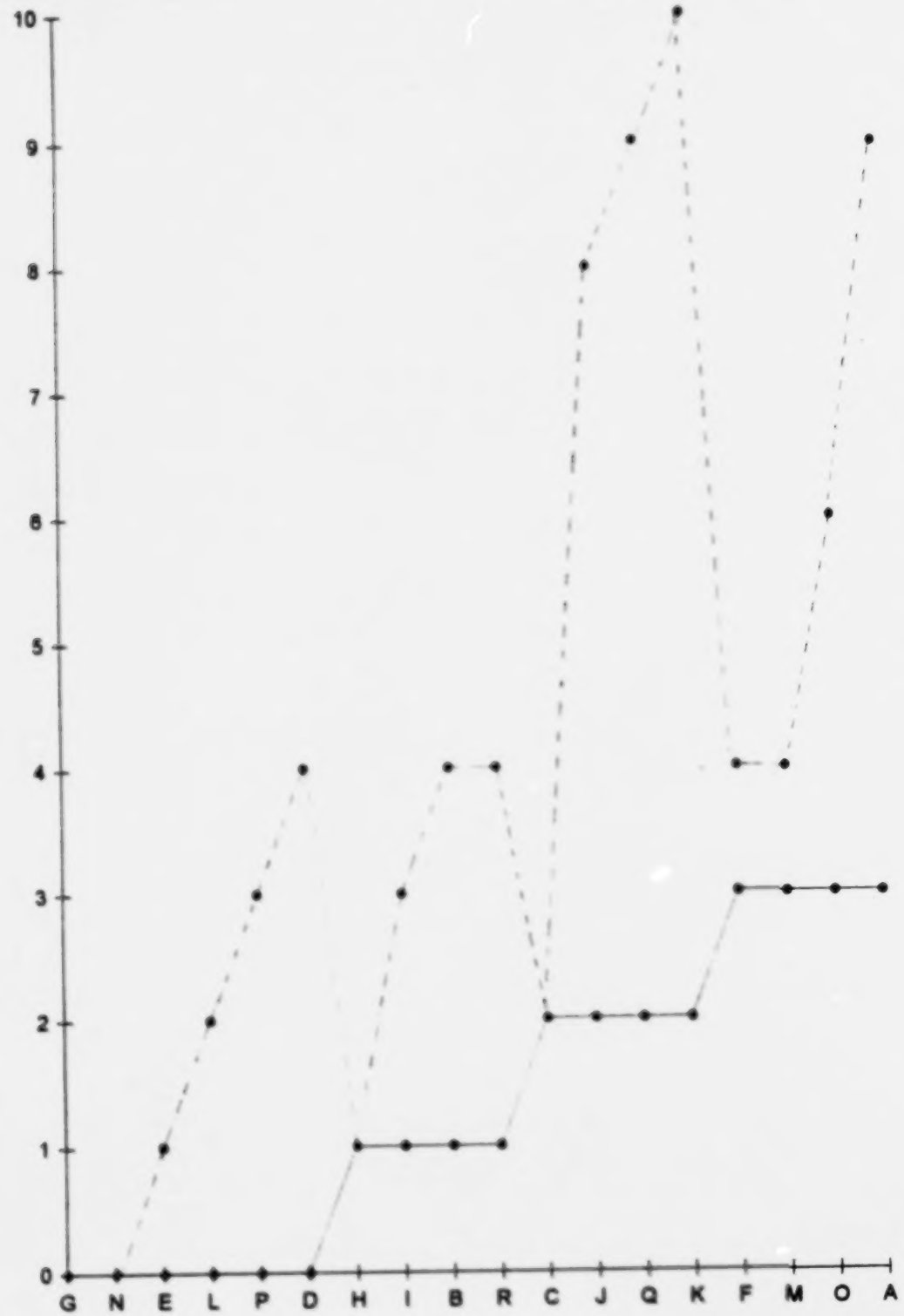
Motivation to Write

Hypothesis A-3: Introduction of showcase writing portfolios will result in a significant increase, as measured by the t-test, in students' motivation to write. The frequency with which the students chose to visit the writing center was considered as an indicator of their increased motivation to write as a result of the showcase writing portfolio intervention. The pre-assessment count of frequency of visitation to the writing center was $\underline{M}$ = 1.33 (SD = 1.19, range from 0 to 3). The post assessment frequency of visitation was $\underline{M}$ = 4.11 (SD = 3.12, range from 0 to 10). Again, the results shown in Table 1 support this

hypothesis, $t(17) = 4.65$, $p < .001$. Thus, the showcase writing portfolio intervention was a successful strategy in significantly increasing the frequency of visitation to the writing center. This result supports the belief stated by Farnan and Kelly (1991) that ongoing assessment, such as portfolios, can influence student motivation. Donald Graves (1983) recommended having students write a minimum of four times a week. Incorporating the showcase writing portfolios into the center times increased the probability of the students attaining this level of frequency, when both the writing center time and the daily journal time are taken into consideration.

As stated in the methods chapter, some of the centers in the classroom had limits on the number of children who could be there at any given time, but the writing center was open to all the children. During the post assessment, the question of how many students could be in the writing center occurred several times, as there were not enough chairs for all the students who wished to be there. This never occurred during the preassessment period. Also, during the post assessment, students began requesting the privilege of taking materials from the writing center to their own desks, as the writing center was too crowded for them to do the work they desired. Again, this was allowed, as long as materials were returned when the student finished. This request never occurred during the preassessment, because there were never enough children present to prevent others from working in this area. This observation is graphically shown in Figure 4. All but four of the students increased the frequency

Figure 4. MEANS FOR PRE AND POST MOTIVATIONAL MEASURE



of their visitations to the writing center. The frequency of visitation for these four students remained the same, neither increasing nor decreasing.

Two of the three special education students also made gains in this area. The mean increase for the entire class in their frequency of visitation to the writing center was 3.44, with a range from 0 to 8. Student D increased his frequency of visitation to the writing center from 0 times during the preassessment to 4 times during the post assessment, ranking him fifth in amount of change in frequency of visitation to the writing center. Student P increased her frequency of visitation to the writing center from 0 times during the preassessment to 3 times during the post assessment, ranking her eighth. Student H neither increased nor decreased his frequency of visitation to the writing center. He chose to visit the center 1 time during both the preassessment and the post assessment, ranking him fourteenth.

Relationships Between Variables

Hypothesis B: Showcase portfolio writing intervention will result in a significant positive relationship, as measured by correlational analysis, between the quality of writing, quantity of writing, and motivation to write.

Correlations between Quality and Quantity

Hypothesis B-1: Showcase writing portfolio intervention will result in a significant positive relationship, as measured by correlational analysis, between the quality and quantity of student writing. Quality, as measured by the rubric scores, and

quantity, as measured by the total words written and the words per paper, were significantly correlated by Pearson product-moment correlation analysis after the showcase writing portfolio intervention (Table 2).

Table 2

Post Assessment Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Between Quality and Quantity of Writing, and Motivation to Write

		Quantity		Motivation
		Total Words	Words per Paper	
Quality		0.67**	0.75**	0.52*
Quantity	Total Words	----	0.81**	0.50*
	Words per Paper	0.81**	----	0.75**

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

A significant correlation between the quality rubric scores and the total words written was shown, $r(18) = .67$, $p < .01$. The relation between the quality rubric scores and the number of words per paper revealed a similar case, $r(18) = .75$, $p < .01$. This supports the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between the two outcome measures, namely quality of writing and quantity of writing.

This finding is in opposition to the research conducted by Turewicz (1983), who found no such relationship among tenth grade

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students. While this may hold true with more advanced students, quantity of writing does seem to be a factor in producing a high quality paper in the early grades. It is difficult to write a paper that includes all the elements of quality contained in the rubrics with only eight or nine words to tell a story, which is what the first graders in this study were doing in the preassessment. However, as in the post assessment, when using an average of 24 words per paper, a first grade author can include many of the elements of quality found in the rubrics, and therefore raise the quality scores.

Correlations between Quality and Motivation

Hypothesis B-2: Showcase portfolio writing intervention will result in a significant positive relationship, as measured by correlational analysis, between the quality of student writing and the students' motivation to write. A Pearson product-moment correlation done on the variables quality of writing, as measured by the rubrics, and motivation to write, as measured by the frequency of visitation to the writing center, revealed a significant correlation, $r(18) = .52$, $p < .05$. This supports the hypothesis that there is a significant positive relationship between the quality of student writing and student motivation to write (Table 2). In this study, frequency of visitation to the writing center was considered a measure of student motivation, rather than a number of practice times. In this interpretation, the study supports the research done by Dickinson (1990), Donato (1990), Dooley (1987), and Esch (1991), where student attitudes toward writing increased when strategies to improve the quality

of the students' writing were used. Donato, Dooley, and Esch all used paper and pencil attitude surveys to determine the change in students' attitudes. Dickinson used the number of disruptions during the writing period as an observable behavior giving an indication of the high school students' attitudes toward writing. None of these researchers worked with students as young as first grade; therefore, through the use of observable behavior as opposed to espoused verbal statements, this study extends the motivational measure to very young children. Additionally, these researchers simply measured the increase in the quality of the students' writing and their attitude toward writing, but did not correlate the two variables.

Pitts (1978) found no relationship between the frequency of writing practice and the quality of student writing. The results of this study are in conflict with Pitts' research. In Pitts' study, frequency of writing practice was measured as the number of in-class writing assignments and homework which was teacher directed and controlled. This is a major difference between the two studies. The difference in ages between the two samples may also be a reason for the disagreement in the findings. Pitts' work was done with high school students, who presumably have already mastered the basics of writing. First grade students are in the emergent writing stage, and would have more motivation to improve their writing than students in high school.

Correlation between Quantity and Motivation

Hypothesis B-3: Showcase portfolio writing intervention will result in a significant positive relationship, as measured

by correlational analysis, between the quantity of writing and the students' motivation to write. Both measures of quantity of writing, namely the total number of words written and the number of words per page, were significantly correlated with the motivation to write, as measured by the frequency of visitation to the writing center (Table 2). There was a positive correlation between the total number of words written and the motivational measure, $r(18) = .50$, $p < .05$, and between the number of words per paper and the motivational measure, $r(18) = .71$, $p < .01$. This supports the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between the quantity of writing children produce and their motivation to write. Therefore, it is in agreement with the work done by Dickinson (1990), Donato (1990), Esch (1991), and Peyton (1988). In these studies, the researchers measured increases in both the quantity of writing students did and their motivation to write, but did not do a correlational analysis. It is difficult to write more total words or more words on each paper without having the motivation to write more frequently. Since the amount of time devoted to journal writing remained the same in the post assessment as in the preassessment, the time to write more quantity was found in the writing center. As students were motivated by the showcase writing portfolios to write more frequently, the quantity of writing they did also increased.

Limitations of the Study

The results of this study should be interpreted with caution due to the following limitations:

1. The small sample size of 18 students.
2. Rubrics are not standard measures. They are open to some variability.
3. The rubric scores were not rated by two separate raters, thus there is no inter-rater reliability.
4. There is no control group. These results therefore could be alternatively interpreted as a measure of developmental maturation and not an outcome brought about by the intervention.

Recommendations and Conclusions

When teaching young children, it is recommended that the entire first semester of the school year be devoted to setting up the classroom environment, and teaching the students how to select topics on which to write, and how to use journals, writing centers, and conferences to improve their writing. Once students are comfortable with the above-mentioned teaching strategies, then the showcase portfolios should be introduced. Introduction of showcase portfolios is an enrichment intervention creating a classroom climate where writing is valued.

In conclusion, this pilot study suggests that portfolios are not simply a procedure to evaluate students' writing, but also an effective instructional strategy teachers can use to teach writing.

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Appendix A

Individual Pre and Post Assessment Writing Outcomes

Student	Quality of Writing		Quantity of Writing				Motivation to Write	
			Total Words		Words per Paper			
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
A	1.90	3.40	135	253	13.50	50.60	3	9
B	1.25	1.14	36	138	9.54	19.71	1	4
C	0.60	2.60	39	398	7.80	39.80	2	2
D	0.50	1.50	14	94	7.00	23.50	0	4
E	0.75	1.71	61	98	15.25	14.00	0	1
F	0.67	2.40	21	92	7.00	18.40	3	4
G	1.25	1.60	45	90	11.25	18.00	0	0
H	0.00	1.50	4	71	4.00	17.75	1	1
I	1.25	2.11	39	188	9.74	20.89	1	3
J	1.00	1.40	21	122	5.25	24.40	2	8
K	1.33	3.00	37	329	12.34	41.13	2	10
L	1.00	2.25	16	86	8.00	21.50	0	2
M	1.00	2.22	10	147	10.03	16.33	3	4
N	0.39	1.57	9	115	3.00	16.43	0	0
O	1.45	2.50	83	204	8.73	25.50	3	6
P	0.00	1.40	5	101	1.67	20.20	0	3
Q	1.00	2.14	23	252	11.50	36.00	2	9
R	1.00	1.89	27	213	9.00	23.67	1	4

Appendix B

MacMillan/McGraw-Hill
Modified Holistic Scoring Rubrics

4 An **excellent** writing sample:
- establishes and focuses on the purpose of the writing task
- shows a clear awareness of the intended audience
- organizes content and ideas in a logical way, and is fluent and cohesive
- includes appropriate details to clarify ideas

Mistakes in grammar, mechanics, and usage do not detract from clarity and mean

3 A **good** writing sample:
- focuses on the purpose of the writing task
- shows some awareness of the intended audience
- organizes content and ideas in a logical way, although transitions may not be
- includes some details to clarify ideas

Mistakes in grammar, mechanics, and usage do not detract from clarity and mean

2 A **fair** writing sample:
- has some awareness of the purpose and intended audience
- attempts to organize content and idea, but is not particularly fluent or omits t
- includes some details

Mistakes in grammar, mechanics, and usage may detract from clarity and meanin

1 A **poor** writing sample:
- is confused in purpose or does not respond to the task
- does not present content in an organized or logical way
- includes few or no details

Mistakes in grammar, mechanics, and usage detract from clarity and meaning.

0 An **unscorable** writing sample is blank, unreadable, incomplete, or "defiant" (e.g want to write about this").

MACMILLAN/McGRAW-HILL
READING/LANGUAGE ARTS
WRITING EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. **A Description** should:
   a. focus on describing the _____ (person, place, thing)
   b. begin with a sentence identifying what is to be described
   c. present descriptive details in an organized way

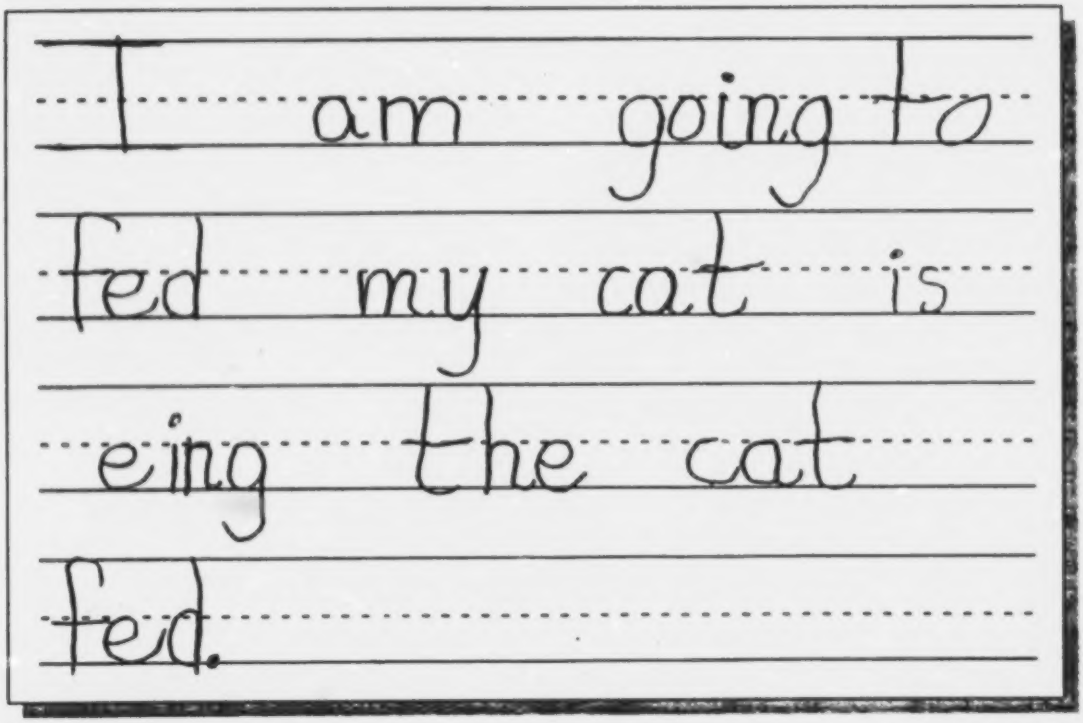
2. **A Narrative Story** should:
   a. focus on telling a story
   b. present a story line with a clear beginning and an ending
   c. present events in sequential order

3. **A How-To** should:
   a. focus on explaining how to complete the specified task
   b. present steps in logical order
   c. describe each step clearly and completely

4. **A Friendly Letter** should:
   a. be written in letter form (greeting, body, signature)
   b. present information about (the topic)
   c. present information in an organized way

* There are four possibilities for writing samples. The journals included only descriptions and narratives; therefore, these are the only applicable criteria.

Sample 1

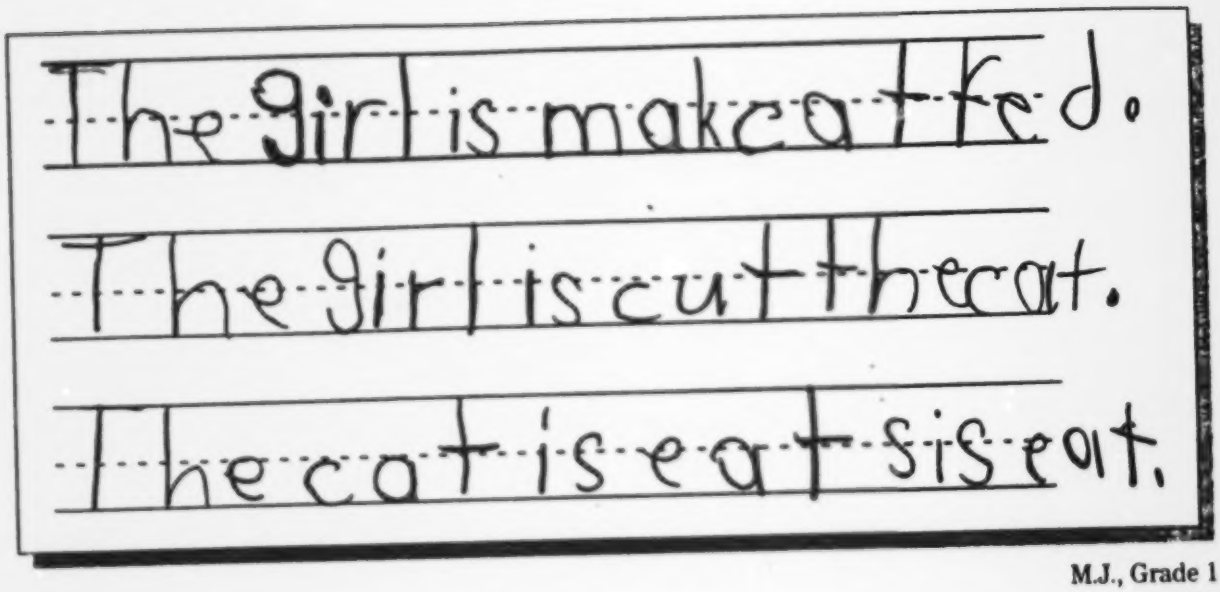


M., Grade 1

Score: 1—Poor

Sample 1 comments: This sample does not respond to the task. It does have a beginning, of sorts, but does not present a coherent story. Mistakes in grammar, mechanics, and usage detract from clarity and meaning.

Sample 2

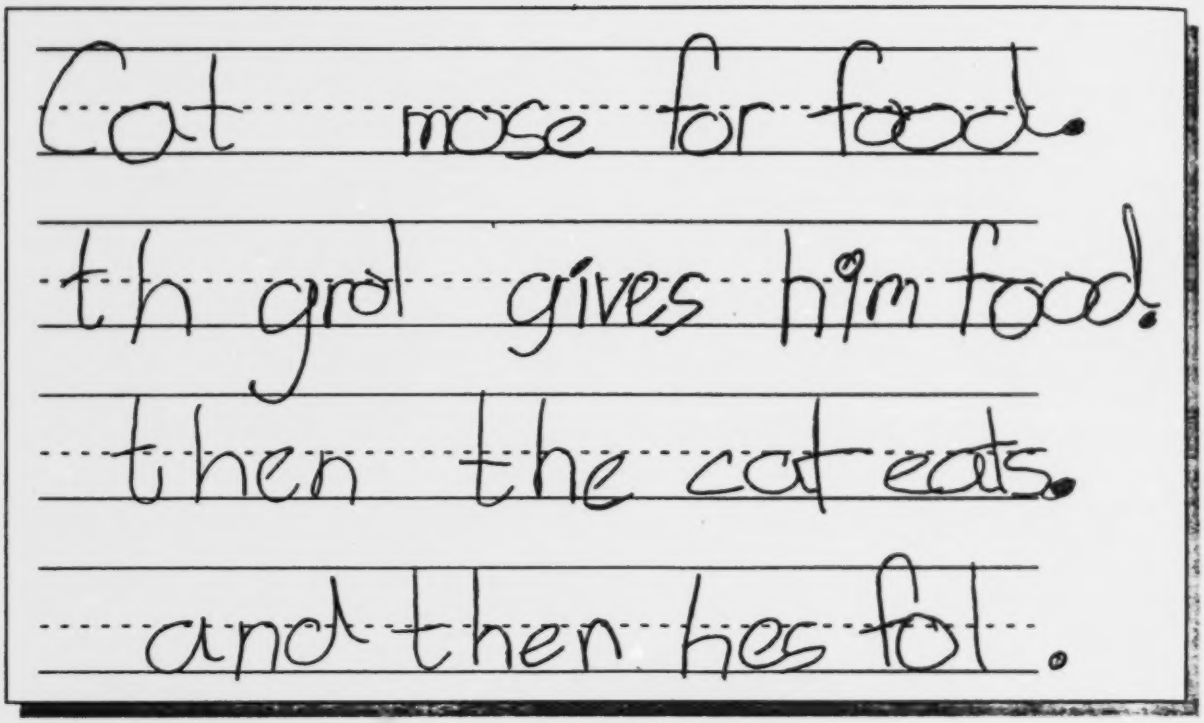


M.J., Grade 1

Score: 2—Fair

Sample 2 comments: This sample shows some awareness of purpose and audience. It attempts to present events in a sequenced way, but it is not particularly fluent. It includes some details. Mistakes in grammar, mechanics, and usage don't really detract from meaning.

Sample 3

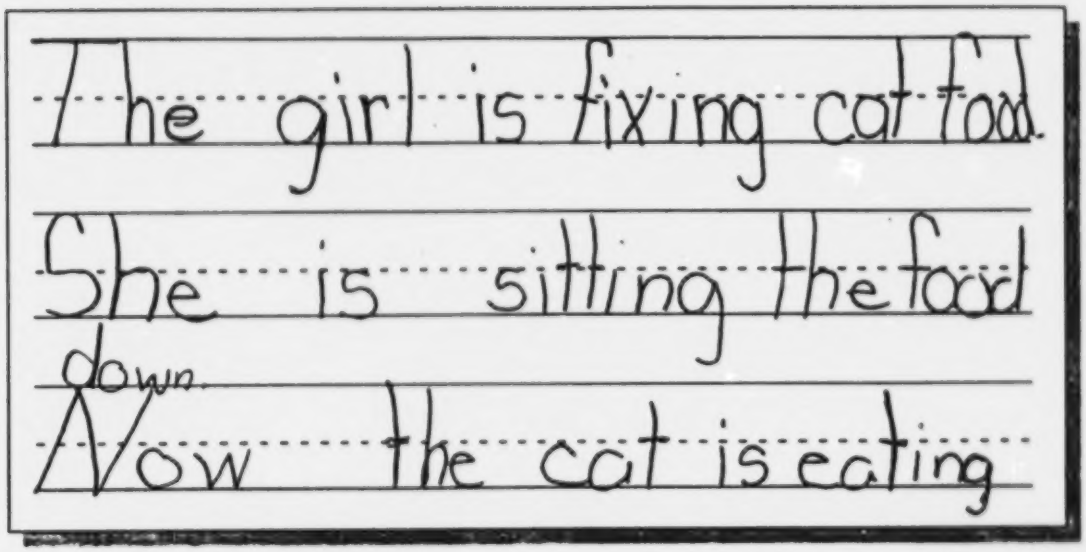


S., Grade 1

Score: 3—Good

Sample 3 comments: This sample focuses on the purpose of the writing task and shows some awareness of audience. It organizes content in a sequential way, and it includes some details. Mistakes in grammar, mechanics, and usage do not detract from meaning.

Sample 4



J.W., Grade 1

Score: 4—Excellent

Sample 4 comments: This sample establishes and focuses on the purpose of the task, to tell a story, with a clear awareness of the audience. It is well organized in chronological sequence and has a clear beginning and ending. Mistakes in grammar, mechanics, and usage do not detract from clarity and meaning—in fact, remarkably, there is only one mistake (using *sitting* instead of *setting*).

Appendix C

Student Writing Samples

Samples of writing receiving a 1 on the modified holistic rubrics:

I was Playing Hiding go seck laste Nite

(I was playing hide and go seek last night.)

I have a sastr and She is men to me.

(I have a sister and she is mean to me.)

i got Fedorov Kad i rilLee Like it i rillee do and i Hav to Kozlov i rillee Like them i rillee do

(I got a Fedorov card. I really like it. I really do. And I have two Kozlov's. I really like them. I really do.)

Samples of writing receiving a 2 on the modified holistic rubrics:

I have a feyethtrip toDay I am Really going to like it and on wednesday we are going on a notr
(I have a field trip today. I am really going to like it, and on Wednesday, we are going to have another.)

I wit to The higam and The redwigs wigd and I rel like redwigs I sa the redwigs I omos wie The hcegam I wie it diwnster we Git too tevey 1 tevey diwnsters 1 tevey upster
(I went to the hockey game and the Red Wings winned and I really like Red Wings. I saw the Red Wings. I almost went to the hockey game. I watched it downstairs. We got two TVs: 1 TV downstairs, 1 TV upstairs.)

Once a upon a time There was a eater baenny and he was a nicei eater baenny he witend to fiend his Mom and his Dad he fiend his Mom nad his Dod Lee nd
(Once upon a time there was an Easter Bunny and he was a nice Easter Bunny. He wanted to find his mom and his dad. He found his mom and his dad. The End.)

Samples of writing receiving a 3 on the modified holistic rubrics:

my hpStr gat a wa and My Brathr was ranen aftr hem arond The hews and My hpStr ran dac in hes caJ and he was tard
(My hamster got away and my brother was running after him around the house. And my hamster ran back in his cage and he was tired.)

I saw 21 frags and I pota It bik and I saw 2 frags agin and I sad nut agin soe I pota It bik and I wat hom and wan I got hom I Eat drb and wat to bed Than The nis mrn I got up wan It was lsh tim
(I saw 21 frogs and I put it back and I saw 2 frogs again and I said, "Not again!". So I put it back and I went home and when I got home, I ate dinner and went to bed. Then the next morning I got up when it was lunch time.)

I witn fiShg aND my DaD Cet 20 fiSh a Big moh a Bas a suml moh I coet a Rioke Bas it was hide Behid a Roike
(I went fishing and my dad caught 20 fish: a big mouth bass and a small mouth. I caught a rock bass. It was hiding behind a rock.)

Samples of writing receiving a 4 on the modified holistic rubrics:

Loge agowe thare Lived a Bosey raBite he was Bosey to His frends and he Nevre chard withe his frends. his mothretolde hime if you Do not stoP Being Bosy to your fends you will not have iny frends he Did not liin to His mom He tolde His mom I'm nevr going to lisine to you His mothre said you are not a nise pirsin. he ran a way and she never saw him.

(Long ago, there lived a bossy rabbit. He was bossy to his friends, and he never shared with his friends. His mother told him, "If you do not stop being bossy to your friends, you will not have any friends." He did not listen to his mom. He told his mom, "I'm never going to listen to you." His mother said, "You are not a nice person." He ran away, and she never saw him.)

My MoM wat iiwt to a Pati My Grama wat to so died My GraPa So My MoM kad My akal foo ap to wick Me We Palrd al nit My MoM and GrSaMa and GraPa deid nit kam Bak entel a 11.klik M akal rated letal nemal and Mad Pikon I fal asep Mie GramakM to Pek me uP

(My mom went out to a party. My grandma went too. So did my grandpa. So my mom called my Uncle Phil up to watch me. We partied all night. My mom and Grandma and Grandpa did

not come back until 11 o'clock. My uncle rented Little Nemo and made popcorn. I fell asleep. My Grandma came and picked me up.)

titile the Boy that thot that sunny Days will com all the time

OnCe upon a time thre livde a littleboy and said "the Sun will come all the time so thin I cude Play all the time" But one day the black clouds came THE BLACK clouds o no I'm geting out of here good-dy BLack clouds. so the little Boy StaD in his hous and novr came out tile the Black cloDs lefe the lend

(Title: The Boy that Thought that Sunny Days will Come all the Time

Once upon a time, there lived a little boy who said, "The sun will come out all the time so then I could play all the time." But one day, the black clouds came. "THE BLACK CLOUDS! Oh no! I'm getting out of here! Good-by, black clouds!" So, the little boy stayed in his house, and never came out until the black clouds left the land.

I saw a bunny. By N_____

illashated By N_____

1994 may spering

i was wokling howme from scooll and I saw a Bunny it was a Gray Bunny and it hoped in my arms I toke ithowme and gave it lots of carits. I made a little howse for the Bunny out of a Box and I read storys too the Bunny and finely it was night time for me and the Bunny. I pot the Bunny in the howse I made for the Bunny and got in Bed. But the BunnyJumped in my Bed and sleeped with me and when I got up the Bunny was eating carits and I sed stop and she stopped and then I saw her famli and I let the Bunny go she was happy too be with her famli But I was sad But my mom sed it's ok you shod Be happy But why mom Because she is happy I ges I shod wel ok Biye little Bunny come agan I'll feed you and your famli lots and lots and lots and thousins of carits. the end.

(I Saw a Bunny

By N_____

Illustrated by N_____

1994 May Spring

I was walking home from school and I saw a bunny. It was a gray bunny, and it hopped in my arms. I took it home and gave it lots of carrots. I made a little house for the bunny out of a box, and I read stories to the bunny, and finally it was nighttime for me and the bunny. I put the bunny in the house I made for the bunny and got in bed. But

the bunny jumped in my bed and slept with me. And, when I got up, the bunny was eating carrots, and I said, "Stop!", and she stopped. And then I saw her family, and I let the bunny go. She was happy to be with her family, but I was sad.

But my mom said, "It's OK. You should be happy."

"But why, Mom?"

"Because she is happy."

"Well, OK. Bye, little bunny. Come again. I'll feed you lots and lots and lots and thousands of carrots."

The End)

Motivational Measure: Frequency Observation Checklist

STUDENTS	DATE				
	M	T	W	T	F

Appendix E

Lesson Plans for Introducing Showcase Writing Portfolios

LESSON ONE: Characteristics of High Quality Writing

Lesson one was performed on days one and two.

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

1. know the concept and purpose of showcase portfolios.
2. identify characteristics of high quality writing.

MATERIALS

portfolio folders

crayons

chart paper or blackboard

markers or chalk

PROCEDURE

Day One:

1. Pass out folders to students. Tell students, "These are special folders. What do you think they could be used for?" Accept all answers.
2. Explain the purpose of the folders.

"These folders are called portfolios. They will be used to keep your very best writing. We will keep them all together in this special box. Then, when your parents or other visitors come in, we can share your work with them."

3. Allow time for students to decorate portfolios (5-10 minutes).

"Since these portfolios will be used to keep your very best writing, they need to be decorated to show that they are special. Right now, you can do that."

4. Have students put portfolios to one side. Ask, "If we are going to put our very best writing in these, what should we look for to decide which pieces belong in here?"

5. Elicit children's answers. List all answers on the board, or on chart paper. Guide students to consider the standards from the rubrics: focus, purpose, content, and organization.

6. Read the list of characteristics back to the students. Inform them that they will return to the list tomorrow to make it easier to use.

Day Two:

1. Reread the list of characteristics of high quality writing from the previous day.

2. Ask, "Is there anything else you can think of to add to this list?" Accept any reasonable answers.

3. Ask students, "Is there anything on this list that seems to be the same or belong together?" Revise, rewrite, and condense items according to student input. Be sure that all students agree before making changes. This can be done by asking, "Does everyone agree? Does anyone think these two should be separate?" (A few children dominated this activity, due to the high level thinking demanded. However, once items like "no scribbling" and "neat" were said to be the same, most of the other students saw the reasoning.)

EVALUATION

Objective 1. Students will know the concept and purpose of showcase portfolios.

All the students were able to state that these folders were going to be used to keep their best writing. Students began asking on day two if they could place selected writings in their portfolios. This request continued throughout the portfolio intervention period. Therefore, the students had not merely memorized a definition for showcase portfolios, but had incorporated the word and concept into their working vocabulary.

Objective 2. Students will identify the characteristics of high quality writing.

The students developed the list of characteristics shown in the form on the following page. The four key areas of quality used in the rubrics, focus, purpose, content, and organization, are all covered. Although they included these areas with some prompting, their major focus was on spelling and grammar, even though this had not been emphasized throughout the school year.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Title: _____

It is a: story poem informational piece

other:

This is my best work because:

1. It does what it is supposed to do.
   - It tells a story.
   - It gives information.
2. It makes sense.
   - Things happen at the right time, not all mixed up.
3. It has lots of details.
4. It is neat.
5. It is my best handwriting.
6. The pictures are good.
   - I used lots of colors.
   - I put in background.
   - They go with the words.
7. I worked on it for a long time.
   - I worked on it 2 or 3 days.
   - I worked on it 4 or 5 days.
8. It is very long.
   - I used the front and back of the paper.
   - I used more than one paper.
9. I checked the spelling.
   - I circled the words I did not know.
   - I looked up the words I did not know.
10. I used punctuation.

    . ? ! " "

11. Other:

I still need to work on:

1. Adding details
2. Putting it in order.
3. Handwriting
   - Neatness
   - Letters
4. Pictures
   - Neatness
   - Coloring
   - Background
5. Length
6. Punctuation
7. Spelling
   - Beginning sounds
   - Ending sounds
   - Middle sounds
   - Vowels
8. Capitals
9. Other:

LESSON TWO: Characteristics of Poor Quality Writing

Lesson two was performed on days three and four.

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

1. identify the characteristics of low quality writing.

2. practice using the lists of characteristics of high and low quality writing on a sample of student writing.

MATERIALS

chart of characteristics of high quality writing

blackboard or chart paper

chalk or markers

low quality writing sample on overhead transparency

overhead

PROCEDURE

Day Three:

1. Review chart of characteristics of high quality writing with students. Have the students read the chart along with the teacher. Ask, "Are there any questions about these characteristics?" Respond to any questions.

2. Turn on overhead projector with the sample of low quality writing. Read the sample to the students. Ask, "Is this good writing?" "Why?" "What could this student do to make the writing better?"

3. As students tell why this writing is not high quality, record their comments on the board or on chart paper, titling the list, "Things We Still Need to Work On".

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

4. After compiling the list, review it with the class. Ask if there is anything else they would like to add. After the list is complete, inform students that they will return to it the next day to make it look like the list of characteristics for high quality writing.

5. Inform the students that they will need a sample of their best writing for Friday. They may start looking for one in their journals, or they may begin one today as they start the journal writing period. As students begin the writing period, begin checking to make sure that they have selected a piece of writing for Friday's activity.

Day four:

1. Reread list of characteristics of poor quality writing produced the day before with the students. Have the students read the list together along with the teacher.

2. Ask, "Is there anything else you think we should add?" Accept and record any reasonable answers.

3. Ask students, "Is there anything on this list that seems to be the same or belong together?" Revise, rewrite, and condense items according to student input. (Students quickly recognized that many of the items were the opposite of those on the list for characteristics of high quality writing, so there was participation from more students this time.)

4. Review the final list. Ask if this list is something everyone agrees with and can live with.

5. Turn on the overhead with the sample of student writing. Read the sample to the students and encourage discussion of it

based on the two lists. Use the items on the chart to guide the discussion. Ask, "Does it tell a story?, Is there a lot of writing?, Do you think the student worked on this for more than one day?," etc.

6. Continue the discussion by asking what the student could work on to make his writing even better. Use the list of characteristics of poor quality writing as a guide in this step.

7. Remind the students that they will need a sample of writing for tomorrow's activity. As they begin the journal writing period, check with students who did not have a sample ready yesterday to make sure they have one for tomorrow.

EVALUATION

Objective 1. Students will identify the characteristics of low quality writing.

The students developed the list of characteristics shown in the form included in the previous lesson. The four key areas of quality used in the rubrics, focus, purpose, content, and organization, are all covered. In this lesson, the students did not require the teacher prompting to cover these areas as in the previous lesson, due to their realization that this list was in essence the reverse of the list of characteristics of high quality writing.

Objective 2. Students will practice using the lists of characteristics of high and low quality writing on a sample of student writing.

Most of the students were eager to contribute their thoughts on the characteristics of high and low quality the writing sample

possessed. Some students, most notably the special education students, had a great deal of difficulty with this task. They were brought together for a mini-lesson after journal writing began, which seemed to help them better understand the application of the lists.

LESSON THREE: Application of Criteria for High and Low Quality Writing to Children's Own Samples

Lesson three was taught on day five.

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

1. gain practice in using the characteristics of high and low quality writing with their own writing.
2. review the use of their showcase portfolios.
3. make an entry in their portfolio.

MATERIALS

student writing samples

writing characteristic papers (one for each child)

pencils

portfolios

PROCEDURE

1. Have students take out the writing samples they selected previously.
2. Pass out the writing characteristics papers.
3. Have students fill out the upper portion of the paper.
4. Ask students to follow along as the teacher reads the first characteristic of high quality writing (It does what it is supposed to do). If this is one reason the student selected the piece, they should circle it.
5. Continue down the list of characteristics of high quality writing the same way, reminding the students that they should circle no more than four characteristics.

6. Begin reading the section titled "I Still Need to Work On:". Proceed in the same manner, reading each characteristic and having the students circle it if they think it applies to their selected writing sample. Remind the students to circle no more than two characteristics.

7. After all students have completed their writing characteristics papers, staple them to their writing. Have students place these papers in their showcase portfolios. Ask students why they are placing these papers in these folders.

8. As they begin the journal writing period, remind them to think about which papers they wish to include in their showcase portfolios. When they begin writing, start calling individual students to discuss their portfolio entries in an individual conference.

EVALUATION

Objective 1. Students will gain practice in using the characteristics of high and low quality writing with their own writing.

Eight students were able to fill out the form appropriately. Eight other students were able to complete the form partially correctly. During individual conferences, they were assisted in completing the form appropriately. Two students had great difficulty in filling out the form. Even in an individual conference, they still had difficulties identifying the high quality aspects of their writing and the items that still needed work.

Objective 2. Students will review the use of their showcase portfolios.

When asked why these papers were being placed in the folders, students who were called on correctly answered that these papers were their best work and belonged in their portfolios. Other students agreed with the students who volunteered this information.

Objective 3. Students will make an entry in their portfolio.

All students made an entry in their portfolio. Although not all the forms were completed correctly at the beginning of journal time on this day, all students did have a writing sample in their portfolio.

DAILY INSTRUCTIONS

1. At the beginning of journal time each morning, remind students to consider their writing for inclusion in their showcase portfolios. Remind them to fill out a characteristics paper and staple it to each piece they wish to include.
2. Tell students that if they wish to have a conference with the teacher about their portfolios to place their portfolio in the basket on the desk.
3. Check portfolios weekly to ensure that all children are making additions, and filling out the characteristics sheets appropriately. Call students who appear to be having difficulty to conference.